
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	647 G Street, SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	February 23, 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	23-096	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Lionell Properties LLC seeks ongoing concept review for a three-story rear and basement addition to a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District. When the Board reviewed the project in December 2022, it found the addition and front areaway to be incompatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Revised Proposal

The rear full-width addition is still proposed as designed in the previous proposal. The demolition floor plans remain the same. The previous proposal showed transparent rear walls noted for proposed demolition, and showed the interior walls and floor levels in red indicating that they might also be proposed for complete demolition. The exterior axonometric views (Sheet H004) now show the rear walls as opaque and colored red (indicating removal), but do not show the interior walls and floors.

At the front, a basement entrance is shown instead of the areaway. The design is compatible with the historic district and the Board's *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows*.

No notes regarding railings have been included at the roof where the roof hatch and mechanical equipment is shown. HPO requested that this information be made clear on revised drawings. The applicants have verbally explained that no railings would be required by code.

Evaluation

There is still a lack of clarity regarding the extent of interior structural demolition. More detailed structural drawings showing which areas of joists are to be retained and reinforced were requested of the applicant but not received. Without such structural framing drawings, the extent of demolition is still not known, and may constitute demolition as per DCMR 10, Section 305(b).

If earth-moving equipment is to be used for the excavation, then it would not likely be feasible that the first-floor framing could be retained; if the excavation is to be done by hand, this framing could be retained. The removal and relocation of the interior stairs would also likely impact many of the existing joists in the main block of the building. Based on the extent of interior

rearrangement and excavation, little interior framing could realistically be retained- but the applicant needs to make this information unambiguous.

Beyond the Historic Preservation Review Board's consideration of potential demolition under DCMR 10, Section 305(b), interior alterations are not generally subject to the Board's review. The Department of Buildings (DOB) is ultimately tasked with reviewing structural drawings to ensure that excavation and underpinning meets the requirements of the DC Construction Code. The DOB reviewers and inspectors will have purview over ensuring that the extent of excavation does not structurally compromise this building or the adjacent rowhouses. The preservation review of basement additions and additional excavation is centered on the associated exterior modifications such as areaways, above-ground railings, and the like.

As said before, if the roof access necessitates additional railings, visibility tests will need to be conducted to ensure that they are set back far enough to not be visible from any points along the public right-of-way.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the revised design compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, with the conditions: (1) the applicant will provide clear and realistic drawings indicating the extent of structural demolition of all floor, roof, and wall assemblies; and (2) no visible railings be added at the roof; and delegate final approval to staff.

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